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# *Mass Intentions*



## *for the Week*

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**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**DECEMBER 22, 2019**

### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21**

*Mass of Anticipation for 4th Sunday of Advent*

4:00PM Michael Alix—Memorial

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22**

*The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

9:00 AM Michael Monteleone—Birthday Remembrance

10:30AM Mariakutty Peter—Memorial

5:00PM Mary & Bernard Falchini—Memorial

### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 23**

*Late Advent Weekday; St. John of Kanty, Priest*

7:30AM Dale Rossi—1st Anniversary

### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE**

*Late Advent Weekday*

7:30AM Pat Franzone—17th Anniversary

### ***The Nativity of the Lord***

4:00PM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

12:00AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY**

### ***The Nativity of the Lord***

7:30AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

9:00AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

10:30AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

### **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26**

*St. Stephen, the First Martyr*

7:30AM Dec'd of Miller & Loeffler Families-Memorial

### **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27**

*St. John, Apostle & Evangelist*

7:30AM Fred & Evelyn Buoro—Memorial

### **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28**

*The Holy Innocents, Martyrs*

8:30AM Brian, Clarence & Noella Laroque—Memorial

*Mass of Anticipation for the Feast of the Holy Family*

4:00PM Carolyn Perretta—2nd Anniversary

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29**

*The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph*

7:30 AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Church

9:00 AM Gene & Mary Verri

10:30AM Janet Fayle—11th Anniversary

5:00PM John Bucci—Birthday Remembrance





Dear Parishioners:

Christmas Day will soon be upon us. And so we anticipate with great joy the celebration of the birth of our Savior. We gather with family and friends, we exchange gifts, eat delicious and luscious foods, and we make merry! Yes, we rejoice on Christmas like no other day during the year. *“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, and Prince of Peace.”*

Everyone of us, young and old alike—has a favorite image or memory of Christmas. Perhaps it is a Christmas song or movie. For some, favorite Christmas memories have more to do with religious and family celebrations. I often think of how as a child we waited to place the figure of the Christ Child in the manger until Christmas night.

The Nativity Story is often a comforting one for us as believers. There are times when we can be comforted by the romanticized picture of the first Christmas with which we are so familiar: the crib, the animals, the shepherds, Mary, Joseph and the Christ Child. We are comforted by this familiar story as it evokes memories of the Christmas rituals of our family and own childhood.

However, there are also times when we can see behind the story to the coming of God into the harsh realities of human life. The death of a beloved, the sickness and addiction of a friend, or the loss of job are everyday occurrences that can often become a harsh reality at Christmas for many. Let us

remember them in our prayers, knowing that Christ's birth is especially meaningful for those who suffer and who long for His coming.

We know that the birth of the Christ child is not simply a feel-good story, but it is rather a significant and life-changing story for us and for our world. Whenever we face some personal difficulty, or feel down about the state of the world, or are burdened with worries, we can be certain that God is in the middle of it all: the Word has become flesh, and really lives in our midst.

I've often heard it said that *“Christmas is for children.”* And if Christmas were only Jesus' “birthday,” then I think that could be true. When we really enter into the mysteries of Christmas, we quickly realize that Christmas is more than just a birthday party. Our Catholic tradition celebrates that Christ, the Divine Messiah and Savior of the World comes to us at Christmas.

We celebrate the Incarnation—Christ coming among us in history—when we recall the world-changing event of the birth of Jesus. In Jesus, God became a human being, born of Mary, to fulfill promises made through the prophets.

At Christmas, we also celebrate how Christ mysteriously comes to us today—in the sacraments most especially the Eucharist, in the words of Scripture, and in our encounters with one another. The Incarnation wasn't a one-time event.

Christmas also reminds us that what happened that night in Bethlehem was only a

beginning. Our faith tells us that, while Christ is always with us, a time will come when we will be fully united with God. So, as we praise God for the gift of Emmanuel at Christmas, we also look to the day when Christ will come again. Life and death have been transformed by what began in Bethlehem. Christmas is ultimately a celebration of what is possible.

The wise still seek Christ at Christmas. It is a time of promise: the light of the star that guided those travelers to Christ is a symbol of how God's grace still guides seekers today. On Christmas, we pray for the gift of faith for those who might have lost their way from Christ and His Church and for those who do not know God's love.

For us as a people of faith, Christmas is truly a rich season that deserves to be celebrated as fully as possible. The truths that are at the heart of this holy time are fundamental to our lives as Catholic disciples. Celebrate the many ways Christ is present among us and is still being born in each of us today. May each of us, like Mary, the Mother of God, take the presence of Christ to all the world.

On behalf of Fr. Barrow, Fr. Connors, and our good Sisters, I wish you a truly Happy and Holy Christmas. May the Christ Child bring you the joy, peace and love of that first Christmas now and forever. Christmas blessings to all!

*Father Healey*



**Why is the Incarnation Important?**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists several reasons why God became incarnate (457-460):

The Word became flesh for us *in order to save us by reconciling us with God*, who “loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.” The Word became flesh *so that thus we might know God's love*: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” The Word became flesh *to be our model of holiness*: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” The Word became flesh to make us *partakers of the divine nature*. “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.”

At Christmas time we focus particularly on the last of these reasons: that we might become sons and daughters of God. Remarkably God took to Himself our human nature. We can meditate on this reality from the point of view of God and from the point of view of humanity. From the standpoint of God our minds are filled with awe knowing that the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent creator of the universe, who transcends time, squeezes himself in a manner of speaking, into a tiny, helpless baby. Similar thoughts can be had about the Mass and the transformation of the Eucharist.

From the standpoint of our humanity, St. Gregory Nazianzus, one of the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church, responding to the heresy that Jesus Christ had not assumed a rational mind, said the following: “What has not been assumed has not been healed.” Other Church Fathers and theologians have spoken similarly. The correlation here is that whatever has been assumed has been healed and transformed. Hence, not just our rational mind, but every single inch of our humanity has been affected; even our past, present, and future. Our weaknesses and sins mask, deface, and hinder what lies below: the awesome potential of redeemed humanity. Of all the ways that God could have saved us and restored our relationship to him, he decided to take on our human nature. There is no greater gift than this!

Christmas is an exciting time precisely because we receive the greatest gift of all: the ability to become like Christ. May we inculcate that message into ourselves and everyone we meet.

# Weekly Collection

**Weekly Collection results are unavailable due to the Christmas deadline.**

***Please remember Our Lady of Mercy Church in your will or estate.***




**The OLM Parish Office will close for Christmas on December 24th at NOON and reopen on December 30th at 8:00AM.**





Religious Education  
NEWS

*We wish all our Religious Education students, teachers, aides and families a Happy Christmas and Blessings for the New Year!*

Mickey St. Jean & Doug Green



Outreach  
Update

*With gratitude and thanks for your support of OLM Outreach for the needy, poor and hungry. I wish all OLM Parishioners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2020!*

Doug Green  
OLM Outreach Director



We wish all our OLM School students, faculty, staff, families, alumni and benefactors a Blessed Christmas Season. May the Blessings of the Christ Child be yours now and in the New Year!

Patrick McNabb  
OLM School Principal

[www.olmschool.org](http://www.olmschool.org)  
*Striving to be Saints & Scholars!*



OUR LADY OF MERCY CHURCH  
EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND  
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

6:00PM - 8:00PM • Two priests available

*Christmas Mass Schedule*

CHRISTMAS EVE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Vigil Mass of Christmas at 4:00PM

Concert of Christmas Music at 11:30PM

Mass of Christmas Night at 12:00AM Midnight

CHRISTMAS DAY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

Masses of Christmas Day at 7:30AM, 9:00AM & 10:30AM

*No 5:00PM Mass on Christmas Day*

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

*New Year's Eve*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31

Vigil Mass at 4:00PM

*New Year's Day*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2020

Masses at 8:30AM and Noon



*We wish you the love Jesus, Mary and Joseph knew on that first Christmas night. May you and your loved ones share the peace and happiness of that love with each other. You and your families will share a special remembrance at Christmas Masses at Our Lady of Mercy.  
A Happy Christmas and Blessings in the New Year!  
Father Healey and Father Barrow*

